

P 241418Z OCT 90
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3283
INFO RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY HARARE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0561
USMISSION GENEVA 0133
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PRETORIA 17357

LONDON FOR MCKINLEY; PARIS FOR FENDRICK

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PGOV PINS SF

SUBJECT: THABO MBEKI ON THE STATE OF PLAY

REF: (A) STATE 340610 (B) PRETORIA 16918
(C) PRETORIA 17247

¶1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY

¶2. IN A TWO HOUR MEETING WITH DCM MCCALLIE, ANC INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR THABO MBEKI OUTLINED DEVELOPMENTS IN ANC-INKATHA PEACE TALKS, CONTINUING SIGNS OF FOUL PLAY BY SECURITY FORCE ELEMENTS, AND THE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SAG. OF KEY IMPORTANCE, MBEKI SAID:

-- ANC AND INKATHA HAVE AGREED TO COOPERATE ON LOCAL PEACE TREATIES IN THE NATAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE, LEADING TO A SUMMIT MEETING OF TOP OFFICIALS FROM EACH SIDE, INCLUDING MANDELA AND BUTHELEZI.

-- EVIDENCE, THOUGH NOT FIRM PROOF, CONTINUES TO SURFACE THAT ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY FORCES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR INCITING BLACK-ON-BLACK VIOLENCE; GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO ACT AGAINST THESE ELEMENTS OR APPOINT A JUDICIAL ENQUIRY AGGRAVATES ANC MISTRUST.

-- THE ANC IS PREPARED TO EXPLORE CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS WITH THE SAG IN THE APPROPRIATE WORKING GROUP, BUT THE SAG HAS STALLED THESE DISCUSSIONS UNTIL VIOLENCE IS DOWN AND MORE PROGRESS IS REGISTERED IN THE ARMED-ACTIONS WORKING GROUP.

END SUMMARY.

¶3. DCM MCCALLIE AND POLOFF LUCAS CALLED ON ANC INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT CHIEF THABO MBEKI AND FELLOW NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) MEMBER AZIZ PAHAD OCTOBER 21 AT THE LATTER'S TEMPORARY RESIDENCE IN MAYFAIR, JOHANNESBURG. DURING THE TWO-HOUR DISCUSSION, THE DCM PRESENTED REF A DEMARCHE (WHICH HE INDICATED HAD ALSO BEEN DELIVERED TO BUTHELEZI - REF B) AND COVERED A RANGE OF OTHER TOPICS.

NATAL PEACE: WORKING FROM THE GROUND UP

¶4. IN RESPONSE TO OUR POINTS ON ENDING ANC-INKATHA CONFLICT, MBEKI EXPLAINED THAT THE JOINT ANC-INKATHA COMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE HAD REACHED AGREEMENT TO PURSUE

SERIATIM LOCAL PEACE TREATIES IN THE MOST VOLATILE AREAS OF NATAL AS A WAY OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A MANDELA-BUTHELEZI SUMMIT. THE SIDES HAD AGREED, MBEKI CLAIMED, THAT A FAILED SUMMIT -- ONE WHICH DID NOTHING TO HALT THE VIOLENCE -- WOULD DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. THE INKATHA DELEGATION, LED BY FRANK MDLALOSE, SEEMED GENUINELY COMMITTED TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND APPARENTLY HAD BUTHELEZI'S FULL BLESSING. FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE EMPANGENI (OR NORTHERN NATL) ACCORD, LOCAL AGREEMENTS WERE CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED IN MPUMALANGA, NDWEDWE AND ELSEWHERE. TYPICALLY, ANC AND INKATHA MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE WOULD TRAVEL TOGETHER TO THE AFFECTED AREAS, CALL TOGETHER LOCAL LEADERS FROM BOTH FACTIONS, AND HELP BROKER A PEACE TREATY.

¶15. MBEKI HOPED THIS PROCESS WOULD EVENTUALLY SUCCEED IN HALTING VIOLENCE, BUT WARNED THAT PROGRESS WAS SLOW AND INKATHA SHOWED SIGNS OF DIVISION. SOME ELEMENTS WISHED TO DERAIL THE ADMITTEDLY DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS. INKATHA JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE SOMETIMES RELUCTANT TO DEFY THESE ELEMENTS OPENLY. RUMORS HAD IT IN ONE CASE THAT BUTHELEZI HIMSELF INCITED LOCAL CHIEFS TO OPPOSE ANC PEACE INITIATIVES. HARD WORK WOULD BE REQUIRED TO KEEP THE PROCESS ON TRACK AND SUSTAIN MOMENTUM, MBEKI SAID; BOTH SIDES NEEDED TO DESIGNATE OFFICIALS WHO COULD DEVOTE FULL TIME TO IT.

¶16. MBEKI SAID THIS PROGRESS ON THE GROUND WOULD HELP ENSURE A PRODUCTIVE SUMMIT MEETING. THE (##) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) AND INKATHA'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE INKATHA LEADERSHIP WAS NO LONGER INSISTING EXCLUSIVELY ON A ONE-ON-ONE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MANDELA AND BUTHELEZI, NOR WAS MANDELA REFUSING TO MEET BUTHELEZI, MBEKI STATED. DATES FOR THE AGREED GATHERING WOULD BE SET ONCE MANDELA RETURNS FROM ABROAD. (NOTE: REF C REPORTS AN OCTOBER 22 ANC STATEMENT WHICH PROPOSES A MEETING OF TOP ANC AND INKATHA OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MANDELA AND BUTHELEZI, "WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE." END NOTE.)

REEF VIOLENCE: SECURITY FORCE ELEMENTS

¶17. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, MBEKI STOOD BY THE FAMILIAR ANC VIEW THAT "ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY FORCES" ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR INCITING VIOLENCE IN REEF TOWNSHIPS. "WE ARE QUITE SURE THE VIOLENCE IS NOT SPONTANEOUS," HE SAID, BUT INSTIGATED IN ORDER TO "DISCREDIT THE MOVEMENT AND WEAKEN THE ANC." EVIDENCE INCRIMINATING WHITE POLICE OFFICERS, FORMER RENAMO AGENTS, AND CCB-STYLE OPERATIVES CONTINUES TO MOUNT. INKATHA ELEMENTS, PROBABLY RECRUITED DIRECTLY BY SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY SERVICES, ARE ALSO INVOLVED, MBEKI CLAIMED.

¶18. MBEKI ADMITTED THAT MOST LEADS IN ANC'S POSSESSION COULD NOT PASS FOR PROOF IN A COURT OF LAW. HE ARGUED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ANC -- IN ITS CURRENT "UNDERSTAFFED, UNDERFINANCED" STATE -- CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP SUCH INFORMATION. ONLY THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE RESOURCES TO DO SO. THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (NIS) CONCEDES THIS POINT, BUT LAW AND ORDER MINISTER VLOK AND HIS POLICE OFFICIALS STILL INSIST THAT THE ANC MUST PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION BEFORE THEY CAN ACT. THIS ATTITUDE, TOGETHER WITH DE KLERK'S REFUSAL TO LAUNCH A JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES OF THE VIOLENCE, CREATES AN IMPRESSION IN ANC RANKS THAT PRETORIA HAS A HIDDEN AGENDA TO UNDERMINE ANC SUPPORT. MBEKI WONDERED WHETHER THE SAG MIGHT ALSO FEAR REPERCUSSIONS FROM THE SECURITY FORCES IF STRONG ACTION IS TAKEN AGAINST ROGUE ELEMENTS. HE LAMENTED THE FACT THAT ANC'S SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER HAD PREVENTED THE ORGANIZATION FROM THOROUGHLY CANVASSING BLACK TOWNSHIP POLICEMEN, MANY OF WHOM HAVE INFORMATION ON THE IMPROPER ACTIVITIES OF THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS.

PROGRESS TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS

¶9. CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP. ASKED WHEN THE ANC-SAG DIALOGUE WOULD BE BROADENED TO INCLUDE OTHER POLITICAL ACTORS, MBEKI EXPLAINED THAT MUCH WORK STILL NEEDED TO BE DONE BILATERALLY. THE SAG AGREES THAT A WORKING GROUP SHOULD CONSIDER CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS, BUT VILJOEN HAS DECLINED TO PURSUE THESE MATTERS BEYOND A SINGLE MEETING (WITH THABO MBEKI) WHICH DID NO MORE THAN SET AN AGENDA FOR ANC-SAG EXPLORATORY TALKS. ACCORDING TO MBEKI, CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING MINISTER VILJOEN HAS PLACED TWO CONDITIONS ON FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL DISCUSSIONS: A DECREASE IN VIOLENCE COUNTRYWIDE AND MORE PROGRESS IN THE ARMED-ACTIONS WORKING GROUP.

¶10. "THE SAG HAS STALLED THE PROCESS," MBEKI ASSERTED, BY LINKING PROGRESS IN VARIOUS WORKING GROUPS. THE ANC ARGUES THAT THE DIFFERENT TRACKS SHOULD BE PURSUED SIMULTANEOUSLY, NOT SEQUENTIALLY. THE ANC BELIEVES THE WORKING GROUP ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS SHOULD IMMEDIATELY TAKE UP CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES AND NEGOTIATION PROCESSES WITH A VIEW TO REPORTING AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT TO THE NEXT ANC-SAG SUMMIT, "GROOTE SCHUUR III." THE QUESTION OF WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE SELECTED NEEDS TO BE THRASHED OUT BEFORE THE TALKS CAN BE BROADENED.

¶11. ARMED ACTIONS WORKING GROUP. IN THIS FORUM, MBEKI COMPLAINED, THE SAG WAS ATTEMPTING TO CONVERT THE ANC'S COMMITMENT TO SUSPEND ARMED ACTIONS INTO AN ABANDONMENT OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE. PRETORIA CHOOSES TO INTERPRET "ARMED ACTIONS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES" (SEE THE PRETORIA MINUTE) VERY BROADLY TO INCLUDE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF MK SOLDIERS. FOR THE ANC'S PART, IT IS WILLING TO END VIOLENT ACTS, INFILTRATION OF MEN AND ARMS, AND IN-COUNTRY TRAINING, BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A FIGHTING FORCE OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. FURTHER, THE ANC FEELS IT HAS NO OBLIGATION TO TURN OVER WEAPONS ALREADY STOCKPILED IN SOUTH AFRICA.

¶12. POLITICAL OFFENSES WORKING GROUP. MBEKI SAID PROBLEMS IN THE POLITICAL OFFENSES WORKING GROUP ARE MANAGEABLE. THE GROUP'S FOLLOW-UP REPORT, DUE FOR RELEASE THIS WEEK, WOULD CLARIFY CERTAIN AMBIGUITIES, E.G., HOW TO APPLY FOR SUSPENSION OF POLITICAL TRIALS IN PROGRESS, AND WHO MUST COMPLETE THE EXILES' QUESTIONNAIRE. THERE IS ANC-SAG AGREEMENT THAT THE BULK OF SECURITY PRISONERS WOULD BE FREE BY YEAR'S END; "THERE SHOULD BE NO ONE ON ROBBEN ISLAND BY JANUARY 1," MBEKI SAID. COMPLICATED SECURITY CASES, AND THOSE INVOLVING PUBLIC VIOLENCE FOR POLITICAL REASONS, WOULD BE REVIEWED BY COMMITTEE BEFORE THE END OF APRIL, ACCORDING TO THE PRETORIA MINUTE.

¶13. ON A PHILOSOPHICAL NOTE, MBEKI IDENTIFIED THE SOURCE OF MUCH ANC-SAG DISAGREEMENT AS A DIFFERENCE IN MIND-SETS. THE ANC ASSUMES THAT ACCORDS REACHED BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES SHOULD OVERRIDE EXISTING LAW. MEANWHILE, THE SAG SEEMS INCLINED TO SEEK CHANGES IN ANC-SAG AGREEMENTS IF THEY COME INTO CONFLICT WITH STANDING LEGISLATION. THUS, THOUGH THE ARMED-ACTIONS WORKING GROUP HAS BEEN MANDATED TO DISCUSS THE DISPOSITION OF ANC WEAPONRY, SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE STILL INSIST ON THE ILLEGALITY OF ARMS CACHES. SIMILAR CONFUSION HAS ARISING BECAUSE THE LAW STIPULATES THAT APPLICATIONS FOR INDEMNITY MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE STATE PRESIDENT, YET THE POLITICAL OFFENSES WORKING GROUP AGREED TO INDEMNIFY WHOLE CLASSES OF EXILES EN MASSE. FINALLY, THE SAG INSISTS ON USHERING IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION THROUGH EXISTING GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES, WHILE THE ANC THINKS A GENERAL REFERENDUM WOULD SERVE TO LAUNCH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. IN ANY CASE, MBEKI SAID, DE KLERK SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT HE CAN WIN APPROVAL FOR THE RESULTS OF CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS, AND PREVENT THE RIGHT WING FROM BLOCKING AN AGREEMENT.

COMMENT

¶14. IN STARK CONTRAST TO BUTHELEZI'S DEFENSIVENESS (REF B), MBEKI'S RESPONSE TO OUR INTEREST IN ANC-INKATHA RAPPROCLEMENT WAS A DISPASSIONATE, UPBEAT EXPLANATION OF ONGOING EFFORTS, SPRINKLED WITH WARNINGS ABOUT THE DELICACY AND VULNERABILITY OF THE PROCESS. WE AGREE THAT PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WILL IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR A FRUITFUL SUMMIT AND BELIEVE A CAREFULLY TIMED JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES, LED BY BUTHELEZI AND MANDELA, COULD BE PRODUCTIVE.

¶15. MBEKI'S SUGGESTION THAT THE SAG HAS INTRODUCED LINKAGE INTO THE WORKING GROUP EXERCISE MERITS INVESTIGATION. IF TRUE, IT IS IRONIC THAT AS THE ANC MOVES AWAY FROM THE RIGID, SEQUENTIAL PROGRAM OUTLINED IN THE HARARE DECLARATION, THE SAG MAY HAVE BECOME LESS FLEXIBLE IN ITS APPROACH TO THE JOINT WORKING GROUPS.

¶16. CONSISTENT WITH ITS SELF-IMAGE AS THE PRIME OPPOSITION FORCE, THE ANC PROBABLY SEEKS TO ESTABLISH THE LARGEST POSSIBLE AREA OF AGREEMENT WITH THE SAG ON CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES BEFORE OTHER PARTIES JOIN THE DISCUSSION. THE SAG, ON THE OTHER HAND, MIGHT NOW WISH TO LIMIT THE CONSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE UNTIL OTHER PARTIES CLOSER TO PRETORIA'S THINKING ARE BROUGHT ON BOARD. END COMMENT.

SWING.